volvement of voluntary organisation, greater efforts in training and retraining of personnel at the grass-root level, establishing greater inter-sectoral coordination strengthening linkage with related development programmes like female literacy and improvement of women's status and adoption of area intensive approach.

Improving the standard of education in rural areas

140. SHRI S. K. T. RAMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that there is a wide gap in the standards of education between the primary schools in the urban areas and the rural areas;

(b) whether Government plan to bridge the gap by taking immediate effective steps to improve the standard of education in the rural areas; and

(c) if so, what concrete steps Government propose to take up for implementation?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ARJUN SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) to promote equality, National Policy on Education 1986 calls for provision of equal opportunity to all not only in access, but also in the conditions for success. It recommends adoption of common educational structure (10+2+3), laying down Minimum Levels of Learning for each stage of education and a substantial improvement in the quality of Primary Education. Some of the concrete steps taken in this direction are:

(i) improvement in provision of minimum essential facilities in all primary schools in the country under the scheme of Operation Blackboard;

(ii) The programme of Non-Formal Education for school dropouts, girls, and working children who cannot attend whole day schools.

(iii) establishment of district Institutes of Education and Training for improving teacher effectiveness;

(iv) The provision of primary schools within 1 km walking distance from all habitation with a population of 300. In the case of SC/ST habitations, the norm is relaxed to include habitations with population of 200;

(v) provision of incentives to socio-economically backward children for free uniform, free text-books, attendance scholarship for girls and provision of mid-day meals;

(vi) provision of upper primary schools and upgrading of primary level according to the norms;

(vii) Laying down of Minimum Levels of Learning for the primary stage and setting up a procedure for learner's evaluation and assessment.

Payment of Royalty by M|s. Videocon to Foreign Parties

141. SHRI PRAKASH YASHWANT AMBEDKAR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether M/s. Videocon Private Limited pays any royalty to any foreign party;

(b) if so, what is the amount thereof; and

(c) whether it is paid in Indian currency or in foreign currency?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR): (a) and (b) There is no company by the name Videocon Private Limited. As per records maintained by the Reserve Bank of India, no collaboration agreement with a foreign party has been entered by any company named as Videocon Private Limited. The Reserve Bank of India have the following collaborations on record:—